

Various indeed are the *means* by which God gathets his people unto Him. The sinner is brought to God perhaps by some calamity, which, while it interrupts his personal enjoyment, withdraws his thoughts from this world, and forces him to think of eternal things. Through some afflictive providence, perhaps, he is led to see the brief and uncertain tenure by which this life is held, and the wisdom of securing an interest in a better world. Numerous are the methods by which the minds of God's people are wrought upon, and brought to see how vain is every human calculation, how shallow is every worldly consolation, and how we should lay up for ourselves "treasures in heaven."

There is, however, one agency especially blessed by the Holy Spirit to gather the people of God, viz., *the preaching of the Word*. He appoints his heralds to go through the world proclaiming the kingdom. He sets apart his ministers to sound the gospel trumpet, and vast multitudes hear "the joyful sound." The greater proportion of those who have been gathered by grace within the pale of the Church have been so instrumentally by the preaching of the gospel—the glad tidings, "God so loved the world that He gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." God thus by his grace gathers together his people unto Him, introduces them into his family, unites them to Christ, their loving Head; a gathering to be effected by God's providences, by means of the ordinances, and by the operation of the Spirit; a gathering to be carried on till death, and to be completed on the morning of the resurrection.

What a glorious gathering shall that be! No river of death shall separate the believer and the Object of his love. All shall be gathered unto God. "He shall send forth His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other." "I beheld," says the apostle John, "and lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations and kindred and people and tongues, stood before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, and palms in their hands; and they cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God, which sitteth upon the throne, and to the Lamb." However the people of God may be separated here, however severed by circumstances of time, or place, or polity, yet the friends in Christ and for Christ, shall at length be gathered together in heaven to part no more.

Various are the causes that combine to separate them on earth. Foreign lands may hold them—oceans may roll between them—bodily infirmities may hinder their visible communion—the distinctions of name or sect may divide them—yet they form but one family. How delightful the thought to the Christian that he is one with all the believers on earth; and not only so, but one with all the redeemed in yonder world of glory! And, after a few more passing years, he shall be united to them in reality, as he is now in spirit. Indeed, it is so now. The saints in heaven and the saints on earth form but one communion. They are subjects of the same grace—they love the same saviour—they are washed in the same blood—they are sanctified by the same Spirit—adopted into the same family—heirs of the same glory. God disperses his people throughout the earth, as He scatters the stars in the firmament, that